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Title: Artuo Aspirant

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Prologue: \_The mage  
incited the ancient  
words "In Vas Mani",  
and the warrior was  
brought off his knees  
and to his feet, a  
great healing  
un-winding its power  
throughout his veins.  
Silently, the mage  
muttered to himself a  
need of embarking as  
soon as possible. He  
trotted stiffly to the  
precipice of the  
gray-rock tower,  
looking over the  
mist-covered plains.  
He could see several  
riders breaking  
through the gray  
mist, causing it to  
dissipate into wisps of  
smoke and then into  
nothing. Circlets of  
deep sea covered their  
pale foreheads and  
raiments of blue they  
wore. They were  
militiamen of the  
Moonglow Town  
Council. The warrior  
was now gripping his  
wrists, which had  
previously been split  
bleeding open. 'Please,  
just you let me die,  
insufferable bastard,'  
he seethed under his  
breath, half-wishing  
his hostility to be  
un-heard. 'I still  
need your strength,  
fool,' muttered the  
mage. 'If we are to  
break the barriers on  
this tower's portal  
then your sword

might come of some  
avail. Quickly, follow  
me!' To the  
north-western corner  
of the tower roof they  
ventured, the mage  
giving one, last  
sidelong glance at the  
approaching riders  
down below. He  
stalked off. His  
dark green robe  
seemed to be hiding  
some sort of secret,  
and his body subtly  
writhed within the  
confines of the green  
shrouds. He followed  
the warrior  
downstairs, sickened  
by his gleaming, iron  
armor. He leaned on  
a staff now and then  
for some measure of  
support. It was then  
one noticed despite his  
mannerisms and harsh  
movements he was an  
old, haggard soul.  
His face was jagged  
with lines and  
wrinkles and such.  
His jaw bent straight  
and dangerously, and  
he spout forth his  
next words with some  
derision. 'Take the  
door... Now!' The  
warrior looked up the  
flight of stairs at  
him, as if waiting for  
him to come down.  
And he did come down.  
He stiff-armed the  
chest of his armor  
forcefully, causing  
him to stumble  
slightly on his heels.  
Spewing his word  
like acid, he eschewed,  
'Go!' The warrior  
pressed downward past  
the final flight of  
steps, which kept him  
from the ground floor.  
Sighing with effort,  
the mage slowly  
slumped himself

upward and back unto  
the roof. A large  
pillar of flames in  
the center of the roof  
cascaded upward and  
disappeared. A new  
group of pillars  
repeated the movement  
and so forth and so  
on. The sight was  
easily recognizable. It  
was the Atlantic  
Mage Tower.

Footsteps came up and  
a figure appeared,  
hands on hips. The  
mage whirled and  
yelled 'Where the hell  
have you been you  
knave?!' The warrior  
was marked with the  
look of battle and  
torn with marks upon  
his armor. His body  
was singed with  
magic explosions. He  
was not a broken  
spirit, though. He  
appeared to be holding  
some secret that gave  
him what he needed to  
fight. He was not  
ordinary. He walked  
over to the mage and  
rasped weakly, 'All of  
them...dead.' The mage  
nodded, uplifted his  
hands, and chanted  
some words not known  
to the ordinary  
spellbook. No, neither  
of these two souls  
were simple in the  
least. And the mage's  
words seemed to ignite  
an invisible power  
which caused the  
pillars to die out and  
stop completely. The  
tower groaned, as if  
in great defeat. The  
spent mage grinned  
crookedly, and he  
seemed satisfied.